

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA/P.JEBRIGGS

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S/PRS - MR. KING (INFO)

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O 292022Z MAY 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING IS PARTIAL
EXCERPT FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING MAY 29,
1974:

QUOTE:Q.DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON TWO AMERICANS WHO HAVE BEEN
HELD IN INDIA ON CHARGES OF VIOLATING THE OFFICIAL SECRETS
ACT AND, ACCORDING TO THE ACCOUNT, THE FULL AND SPECIFIC
CHARGES AGAINST THEM HAVE NOT YET BEEN MADE KNOWN?

A. THAT'S ALSO MY UNDERSTANDING.

LET ME GIVE YOU WHAT I HAVE HERE. RICHARD WINN HARCOS AND
ANTHONY ALLEN FLETCHER, TWO AMERICAN CITIZENS, WERE
ARRESTED APRIL 26 IN CALCUTTA. NOW, AS I UNDERSTAND THIS --

Q. '73 WASN'T IT?

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A. '73, YES -- ONE WAS PICKED UP IN A RESTRICTED AREA OF THE CALCUTTA DOCKS; AND THE OTHER, I GATHER, WAS PICKED UP ELSEWHERE. AND AFTER HOLDING THEM NOW WITHOUT CHARGES FOR A NUMBER OF MONTHS, APPARENTLY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HAS NOW DECIDED TO TRY THESE TWO MEN UNDER THEIR OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT.

I'M TOLD THAT WE EXPECT THE TRIAL TO COMMENCE SHORTLY IN CALCUTTA.

WITH RESPECT TO AGES AND HOMETOWNS OF THE TWO INDIVIDUALS, HARCOS IS 27, FLETCHER IS 30. AND LAST KNOWN ADDRESS IN THE UNITED STATES FOR THEM IS SAN FRANCISCO.

Q. ARE THEY SUPPOSEDLY WORKING TOGETHER, OR WERE THEY PICKED UP AS TWO SEPARATE ARRESTS? DID INDIA SAY THEY WERE WORKING AS A TEAM?

A. WELL, THIS IS ONE OF OUR PROBLEMS. NOT HAVING SEEN THE SPECIFIC CHARGES, WE DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THEIR RELATIONSHIP IS AND WHAT ACTIVITIES THEY ENGAGED IN WHICH CAUSED THEM TO COME UNDER THE EYE OF THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT.

Q. UNDER INDIAN LAW CAN'T THE ENTIRE TRIAL BE HELD IN SECRET WITHOUT YOU EVER LEARNING WHAT THE CHARGES ARE?

A. I DON'T KNOW, BUT I WOULD LIKE TO SAY CATEGORICALLY THAT NEITHER HARCOS OR FLETCHER HAS ANY CONNECTION OF ANY SORT WITH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. THEIR PRESENCE IN INDIA HAD NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES. I SAY THIS BECAUSE I WANT THE RECORD CLEAR INASMUCH AS THE CHARGES THAT WILL BE BROUGHT AGAINST THEM WHETHER IN CAMERA OR IN AN OPEN TRIAL, I DON'T KNOW HOW THAT --

Q. DO YOU HAVE A CONSULAR AGREEMENT WITH INDIA?

A. WELL, LET ME FINISH WHAT I WAS SAYING. I MENTION THAT BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THE SORT OF A BASKET CATEGORY OF THE CHARGE, OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT VIOLATION. I WANTED THAT UNCLASSIFIED

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ON THE RECORD.

NOW, I DON'T KNOW, I ASSUME THERE IS A CONSULAR AGREEMENT WITH INDIA BECAUSE OUR CONSUL GENERAL AT CALCUTTA HAS --

Q. WHAT'S HIS NAME?

A. I'LL GET IT FOR YOU.

Q. I BELIEVE IT IS LAWRENCE PICKERING.

A. LAWRENCE PICKERING. BUT ANYHOW, THE CONSUL GENERAL ARRANGED FOR COUNSEL FOR THE TWO MEN, AND OFFICERS OF THE CONSULATE GENERAL HAVE FREQUENTLY VISITED THE ACCUSED. NOW, ALSO THE CONSULATE GENERAL, AS WELL AS THE EMBASSY UP IN DELHI, HAVE URGED THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA OVER THIS LONG PERIOD OF THEIR DETENTION TO COME FORWARD WITH ITS CHARGES AND TO BRING THE TWO MEN TO TRIAL PROMPTLY. BUT NOTHING I HAVE HERE INDICATES WHETHER THEY WILL BE TRIED IN SECRET OR AT A PUBLIC TRIAL.

Q. HOW LONG HAVE WE KNOWN THAT THESE TWO MEN HAVE BEEN HELD BY THE INDIANS?

A. APPARENTLY SOME WHILE. THE FACTS THAT I HAVE HERE INDICATE THAT THE CONSULATE GENERAL AND THE EMBASSY UP IN DELHI HAVE BEEN TAKING EVERY MEASURE TO SEE THAT THESE TWO MEN RECEIVE DUE PROCESS UNDER INDIAN LAW, THAT THEY ARE GENERALLY ACCORDED A FAIR SHAKE.

Q. YOU USED THE PRESENT TENSE WHEN YOU WERE SAYING THAT NEITHER HARCOS NOR FLETCHER HAS ANY CONNECTION WITH THE U-S. GOVERNMENT. DID THEY EVER HAVE IN THE PAST?

A. A VERY GOOD POINT. LET ME AMEND THAT TO INCLUDE THAT WE KNOW OF NO CONNECTION THEY EVER HAD.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON WHO THEY WERE EMPLOYED BY, WORKING FOR, OR ANYTHING?

A. WE MAY HAVE IT. I DON'T HAVE IT HERE.
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Q. THERE WAS MENTION IN THE NEWS STORY OF A THIRD MAN WHO WAS ENGAGED IN THIS HORRENDOUS CONSPIRACY BUT WHO WAS NOT APPREHENDED, APPARENTLY BECAUSE HE WAS SOMEWHERE ELSE. DO YOU KNOW WHO THAT THIRD MAN IS?

A. I DON'T, NO.

Q. FROM THE INFORMATION THAT YOU'VE RECEIVED, DOES IT APPEAR THAT THIS IS A DRUG CASE?

A. DRUG -- SMUGGLING -- OFFICIAL SECRETS -- I JUST CAN'T SPECULATE UNTIL I KNOW -- I WOULDN'T SPECULATE UNTIL I KNOW WHAT THE CHARGES ARE.

Q. WHAT HAVE THE CONSULATE GENERAL TOLD YOU, ON THE BASIS OF THEIR MEETINGS WITH THESE TWO PEOPLE, ABOUT WHAT THEY WERE DOING THERE?

A. WHAT HAVE THEY TOLD US THEY WERE DOING THERE?

Q. YES, WHAT HAS THE CONSUL GENERAL, MEETING THESE TWO MEN RELAYED TO YOU ABOUT WHAT THEY WERE DOING THERE?

A. I'LL FIND OUT; I DIDN'T HAVE THE WIT TO ASK. END QUOTE.

2. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S RECOMMENDATION AS TO HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND TO QUESTION ABOUT CONSUL GENERAL'S REPORTING OF WHAT HARCOS AND FLETCHER TOLD US. BROWN

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